



NEWS RELEASE

WYOMING DISTRICT OFFICE

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Ben Avery Named Financial Services Advocate of the Year 2003

Cheyenne – The Wyoming District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has named Ben Avery, Portfolio/Loan Program Manager for the Wyoming Business Council as the Financial Services Advocate of the Year 2003.

This award is given to an individual who assists small businesses in obtaining financing, either directly or indirectly or through advocacy efforts to increase the availability of financial services. The President of the United States recognizes contributions of the small business community to the American economy and society by proclamation each year.

Ben Avery joined the Wyoming Business Council in 2001 after working in the Wyoming banking industry for over 22 years. Ben is a fourth generation Wyoming native born and raised in Lander. As a graduate of the University of Wyoming, Ben received a bachelor's degree in economics and is a graduate of the Colorado School of Banking.

During the past two years, Ben has reviewed 63 business plans with individuals in 28 different Wyoming communities. Ben successfully advocated for the Legislative changes to the Wyoming Partnership Challenge Loan Program and is an active participant in the quarterly Venture West meetings held throughout the State.

Ben is an initial investor, manager and treasurer of the Community Development Financial Institution Fund (CDFI) application to the U.S. Department of Treasury. This application, once approved by the U.S. Treasury, will enable the CDFI to accept investments and loans from financial institutions, individuals and other entities which will be matched by the Department of Treasury. The CDFI will then make equity investments and loans to businesses and/or individuals in underserved areas of the State.

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